

**THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY  
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**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION  
2167 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**AIRLINE PASSENGER BAGGAGE SCREENING:  
TECHNOLOGY AND AIRPORT DEPLOYMENT UPDATE**

**JUNE 29, 2006**

Chairman Mica, Congresswoman Kelly, Congressman Weiner, Congressman Pascrell, Congressman LoBiondo, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, good morning. I am Susan Baer, General Manager of Newark Liberty International Airport for The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. On behalf of the Port Authority, I would like to thank you for calling this hearing and giving me the opportunity to testify today and to share with you our thoughts regarding the airline passenger baggage screening. My comments will be brief and I request that my entire statement be entered into the record.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is a bi-state public authority created in 1921 by our States with the consent of Congress. Its mission on behalf of the States of New York and New Jersey is to identify and meet critical transportation infrastructure needs of the bi-state region and provide access to the rest of the nation and to the world. The role of the agency's Aviation Department is to run four airports that are critical to the nation's trade, travel,

commerce and tourism – a rapidly growing global gateway, John F. Kennedy International (JFK); a major domestic and international hub, Newark Liberty International (EWR); the premier business airport, LaGuardia (LGA); and a vital corporate and general aviation reliever, Teterboro (TEB); as well as an urban helipad, the Downtown Manhattan Heliport (DMH). These facilities can handle aircraft as diverse as a Piper Cub, a Sikorsky S-76, the Boeing 747-400 and soon the Airbus A380. These airports were used by nearly 100 million passengers, an increase of over 6 percent over 2004's total, making our airport system the busiest in the nation. This activity produces annually an astounding \$62 billion in economic activity and directly and indirectly supports more than 375,000 jobs in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan region.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has entered into a partnership with the Federal Government on managing airport security. Specifically, the Port Authority and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) are joined together in a common pursuit, exploring new territory and meeting difficult challenges. Like all partnerships, to be successful, the parties need to agree on objectives, share with each other our concerns and provide mutual support. To cultivate and sustain our good relations with TSA at Newark Liberty as well as our other airports, we hold weekly conference calls, conduct bi-weekly inspections, organize tabletop problem solving exercises, and cross-train TSA and Port Authority staff in an effort to improve communications and cooperation. Of course, to be successful, we need committed backers in Congress and the

Administration who provide oversight while remaining flexible and most importantly who are willing to fully support the endeavor financially. As operator of one of the nation's busiest airport systems, it is vital that the aviation screening system be responsive to our increasing passenger and cargo traffic. The aviation screening system needs to be effective, customer-focused, performance-driven, risk-based and be given adequate resources to fulfill its mission. I am also proud to report that the Newark recently established an airport-wide security task force under the leadership of Port Authority Chairman Anthony Coscia to ensure that the airport is doing everything possible to focus on security issues. The results of that effort were both enlightening and satisfying. Some of the group's findings were helpful in determining what areas need more attention and other findings found efficient and innovative processes that have been put in place on behalf of the traveling public. The findings were also shared with our colleagues at our other airport facilities to further improve their security plans and procedures.

We recognize that the TSA had a very tough job in quickly establishing its screening operation after September 11, 2001, and the passage of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA). With the advent of TSA, aviation screening has become much more focused than that which existed before its establishment.

Ideally, we would like to measure aviation screening performance in terms of an objective set of performance measures. We would like a well-defined set of objectives for each component of the screening process for which we would receive regular feedback. For checkpoint screening such measures as contraband intercepted, average wait times, maximum wait times and staff courtesy are some of the basic measures for which airports desire regular feedback.

Screeners are the front line in the battle to protect our nation's airports from terrorism. Air passengers traveling through the high-profile, fast-paced New York/New Jersey region need the confident assurance of the TSA's diligent screening standards, and sufficient numbers of screening personnel to meet the heavy volume of traffic of our terminals. We are concerned that at a time when our passenger traffic is on the rise and surpassing previous levels, TSA staffing strategies continue to focus on the artificial screener cap.

Of course, screeners can't do it alone. The TSA also faces enormous physical capacity challenges at airports as passenger traffic grows rapidly. Unfortunately, at some of our older terminal facilities like those at airports across the country, there is often a lack of adequate space for checkpoint and baggage screening. It is difficult and expensive to re-configure existing facilities and sometimes it is just not possible to add security lanes without undertaking an expensive capital construction project that neither the financially ailing airline industry nor we are

well-prepared to undertake. We also need to reconfigure bag rooms to provide for the installation of equipment that is currently located in passenger terminal lobbies.

Even more baggage screening equipment is needed for our facilities since equipment needs cannot be determined by a ratio of total equipment to total passengers but must rather address the distribution of passengers across our many terminals at peak periods. In other words, the equipment isn't always where it is needed when it is needed. In-line baggage screening systems offer speed of processing, savings in personnel costs as well as the restoration of terminal lobbies for their original purposes. However, the cost of facility modifications to accommodate in-line screening is beyond our capacity to support.

As we anticipate the need for much more money for in-line screening modifications, we are persuaded that current industry proposals for reimbursement agreements based on future cost savings may be a workable solution to TSA – airport capital funding. The idea is to activate existing legislative authority or structure new authority allowing airports needing an in-line baggage solution to define implementation plan, estimate the cost of implementation, calculate the annual O&M savings anticipated once the system is operational, compare that to a baseline current cost for TSA at our airports,

then negotiate that annual savings amount to be dedicated to the airport until a federal contribution equal to 90% of the implementation cost has been received.

As an aside, airport operators such as ourselves that lease many of our terminals to airlines and third parties have found that the Letter-of-Intent (LOI) process has posed many difficulties because the TSA's legal agreements do not readily allow for the pass-through of LOI obligations to the leaseholder for the investment in improvements to their leaseholds, though these improvements are for the public benefit.

Funding isn't the solution for every problem. Understanding that it is costly and sometimes impossible to expand our existing facilities to accommodate the ever-increasing number of checked bags that need to be screened, the Port Authority wishes to help pioneer such alternatives as remote baggage check-in. The New York/New Jersey region is unique in having a densely populated urban core with rail access to our two major international gateways. In the coming years, thanks to the leadership of Governor Pataki and Governor Corzine, and with the help of Congress, we will have a magnificent new portico to New York City; the stunning Moynihan Station, as terminus for our two airport rail connections, would be an ideal location to offer remote-baggage check-in. We would like to partner with the TSA to take advantage of passengers' desire to surrender their baggage after leaving their hotels, freeing themselves for an afternoon of sightseeing before heading out to the airports for their evening departures. By taking control of this

checked baggage earlier in the day, the airport and TSA can alleviate peak-period congestion. This would alleviate added strains on old and overworked baggage handling systems and would permit the TSA to receive some checked baggage earlier than usual, thus permitting a more steady flow and more efficient screening. The TSA will be able to better deploy their resources if checked baggage screening is made more efficient. In order to move forward we seek federal resources to help construct and staff a remote baggage processing facility.

As the number one gateway to the nation, the Port Authority airports often serve as the initial point-of-entry for many international visitors. To ensure the safety and security of the nation, we commend efforts to implement new technologies that use biometrics and automation to efficiently and effectively process international guests. Improved passports with new biometric features are one element of this overall effort. While not the purview of TSA, we compliment the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on the successful implementation of US-VISIT for arriving passengers. We hope that DHS incorporates the concerns of airports into the design of US-VISIT for departing passengers. Unlike US-VISIT inbound, which was incorporated into an existing process using existing Customs and Border Protection staff, US-VISIT outbound introduces a new process, with a new group of employees, inserted into the departure process after passengers would expect they had completed all the necessary formalities. Many passengers are likely to inadvertently run afoul of the new requirements

because the proposed outbound process is not intuitive and is unnecessarily burdensome.

Recognizing that necessity is the motherhood of invention, there are now many technologies that have evolved since the creation of the TSA just four years ago. We strongly support the implementation of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, March 2005 Audit findings that call for the greater deployment of technology. The TSA needs to deploy the latest technology to aid the aviation screening workforce in detecting the threats that face us today. Certainly technological advances in screening equipment may help lead to greater staffing efficiencies and improved detection capability. We are pleased to have been a test site for explosive trace detection portals for passenger screening. We look forward to the wide incorporation of this equipment at screening points, though processing speed and space limitations may constrain its full utility at this time. In addition, Newark served as the pilot airport for the Reveal baggage machines. The Port Authority was not a partner in that pilot, but I'm sure others on this panel can speak to that project and its results.

New technology designed for the screening points such as backscatter X-ray which basically sees through persons' clothing and reveals concealed weapons, in the future will give screeners powerful tools in detecting weapons and explosives. We urge the TSA to push forward in resolving the privacy concerns



attending this equipment so that it may soon be made available at airports. Other technology such as automated explosives and weapons detection equipment for the passenger screening points should be further developed and deployed, and cutting edge technology aimed at subject stress or duress detection should be explored. Because terrorist capabilities and techniques will continue to increase and evolve, it is necessary that Research and Development in detection equipment and techniques continue to address the ever-changing threat.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is committed to serving as a DHS/TSA test bed for technology to enhance security at our nation's airports. We have participated in tests of biometric access control, vehicle tracking, video situational awareness, RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Technology) cargo tracking, cargo radiation detection, ASDE-3 radar use for perimeter surveillance, and many more. A number of our fellow airports are also conducting such tests under TSA and DHS auspices as well as at their own initiative. We urge the government's continued investment in pilots of promising technology, and ask the TSA to facilitate the exchange of information among airports about the results and lessons learned from pilot tests.

Some technologies that can have demonstrable benefits to securing our airports are not so new and it confounds us that resources have not been made available. Our experience with costly terminal evacuations due to breaches of

security screening points has convinced us that closed circuit television surveillance of the screening points is a necessity. In 2003, the Science and Technology Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security estimated the economic losses associated with terminal evacuations at American airports. They found that such evacuations at LaGuardia Airport alone ranged from \$1.5 million to \$5.95 million per incident. Surprisingly, after the TSA assumed control of the screening checkpoints and made the necessary modifications, the TSA did not install such surveillance. To our disappointment, the TSA has still not provided specific funding for CCTV installation at the checkpoints. The Port Authority's lease arrangements with its tenant airlines would require that any Port Authority expense for such work be charged back to the airlines. Of course, the financially beleaguered airlines object to an expense that is not mandated by the TSA. While the Port Authority has applied for the use of Airport Improvement Funds (AIP) for this purpose, it must be noted that the use of limited AIP funds for such worthy security projects thereby depletes support for other necessary airport capital projects traditionally funded by AIP, such as airfield improvements. However, our Board of Commissioners are committed to CCTV and as a result, the Port Authority has dedicated some of our own capital resources to begin installation of cameras in areas where we feel it is appropriate.

In partnership with the DHS Office of Domestic Preparedness, our agency has conducted security risk assessments of all of our facilities, and resolved to commit our resources to major capital security enhancement programs. These

enhancements go beyond the current required security standards of the TSA, and reflect the best practices of our industry, as well as new technology adapted from research and testing of the Department of Defense and the TSA's own Transportation Security Lab in Atlantic City, New Jersey. We expect that we will assist our colleagues at other airports in leading the way on these improvements. It is a costly endeavor, however. For airport enhancements alone, the Port Authority's Board of Commissioners has authorized over \$200 million in capital work to harden our terminals and perimeters, to introduce new surveillance systems, and strengthen our access control systems. We endeavor to work in close partnership with the TSA on improving airport security, serving as test beds for TSA pilot projects, sharing our own research and experience, and developing and implementing new standards.

Port Authority Chairman Anthony Coscia has pledged the Port Authority's commitment in this regard, and offered our airports to be the first in the nation to implement the TSA's biometric standards for access control when they are officially promulgated. Similarly, our airports are currently pursuing additional background check procedures for workers in secure areas of our airports. At Newark Liberty, we conduct verification of social security numbers of employees working in these areas. We believe that this is a beneficial augmentation to the current TSA requirements for screening employees, and it should have the support of statutory authority through Congressional legislation and federal regulation.

I would again like to thank the committee for this valuable opportunity to share our views. We look forward to working with this committee in the future on our shared goal of effective, customer-focused, performance-driven, risk-based security.